

CHILD CARE INITIATIVES FOR WORKING PARENTS

**Why Employers
Get Involved**

Renée Y. Magid

An AMA Survey Report

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INTRODUCTION

The face of America's workforce is changing. In our complex society, new family lifestyles have produced radical transformations in the concept of family life. These changes, in turn, have altered traditional views of the work-family relationship, the workforce, the workplace, and more broadly, employer responsibility. Both employers and employees are experiencing a period of adjustment and experimentation as a new work-family dynamic evolves.

In response to the altered state of the American family, some of today's managers—corporate activists, in a sense—may, in fact, be instigating a quiet revolution. Our research for this study on the status of child care programs among U.S. organizations has uncovered an emerging trend fostered by American business people and the corporations they direct. This trend, while it has been evolutionary in nature and is still in its embryonic stages, may signal revolutionary changes in the future of work-family lifestyles and relationships, and on a larger scale, in the character and posture of business in American life.

What are the factors involved in this merger of the spheres of work and family—which had grown almost as separate in the U.S. work ethic as church and state? For one, the configuration of the typical American family has changed. Its values, lifestyle, and loyalties are dramatically different from what they were several decades ago. Consider the following:

- The typical distribution, with father as sole breadwinner, mother as mostly homemaker, and 2.5 offspring, is now about as uncommon as the two-piece bathing suit in the thirties. It is estimated that only 11 percent of all current households fit this “typical American family” picture.

Specifically,

- One-third of all mothers with infants work.
- Women are returning to work within six weeks to three months after childbirth, leaving infants in some kind of child care arrangement.
- Almost 66 percent of all husband-wife families now have two earners.
- Sixty-six percent of all single (separated, divorced, widowed, never-married) mothers are in the labor force.
- Forty-three percent of mothers with children under the age of three are in the labor force.
- Two-thirds of all working mothers leave their children with other adults for a significant part of the day.

The new family configurations are, in turn, changing the American workforce—the driving power behind U.S. business and industry. Here are some of the repercussions.

- Work outside the home appears to have become as important to women as to men.

- As a result, male employees will no longer have wives who manage their home lives full time. More males will have family care responsibilities, and these responsibilities will be more extensive than in previous generations.
- If the number of single-parent families remains the same or increases, a larger portion of the workforce will consist of females who have sole responsibility for parenting and work.
- To fulfill parenting responsibilities, more parent-employees may need to arrange for irregular or reduced-time schedules.
- A larger portion of valuable and talented parent-employees may no longer be readily available for overtime work, business travel, and relocation.

Moreover, various studies indicate that by the end of the century labor shortages will exist in many high-technology and service industries. These shortages will be especially acute in the areas of clerical work, health care, and education—endeavors with traditionally high female participation.

With the decline in government child care supports, less child care is now available in relation to need. More than at any time in history, government is looking toward employers to respond to a new and evolving workforce.

In the face of sweeping changes, employers accustomed to a traditional male labor force are finding it increasingly difficult to insulate themselves from family issues and the concerns of parent-employees. On the one hand, these employers realize that if their organizations (and the nation as a whole) are to utilize the available pool of talented workers, parent-employees must continue as working members of society. On the other hand, if employers are to adopt new work policies in response to child care needs, then it is important that they have information that will aid them in this crucial decision-making process. In many cases, the needed information is unavailable, incomplete, or inadequate. Issues

and concerns such as these gave impetus to the present study.

THE STUDY—ITS FOCUS AND GOALS

The overall purpose of the study was to determine the current status and perceived benefits of employer initiatives for child care in the United States. More specifically, the survey was designed to provide data that would answer these questions:

1. How many child care programs are currently in operation? What kinds of organizations are sponsoring these programs?
2. What were the employers' reasons for initiating the programs?
3. What effects, from the employers' point of view, do these programs have on their organizations?
4. What benefits do employers see as growing out of these programs?
5. What do such programs cost? What financing arrangements did the sponsoring organizations use to establish the programs?
6. How extensively do parent-employees use these programs?
7. What are the important features of the programs?

Earlier studies have offered partial information to employers regarding child care at the workplace. However, there is at present little or no literature relating to the options available to employers and the effects of these options on the sponsoring organizations. Past research gave primary consideration to on-site child care, an arrangement that does not meet the needs of all individuals or all organizations. In addition, existing studies have not dealt with questions of the employers' motivation for creating such initiatives or the perceptions of these employers as to the benefits and effects of their initiatives. Moreover, a number of economic issues surrounding child care initiatives are unique at this point in history and could not have been addressed until now.

HIGHLIGHTS and CONCLUSIONS

The survey data point to a heightened interest in child care incentives, considerable creativity and resourcefulness in the development of these incentives, and a recognition that both parents and employers benefit from an effective child care program. Consider these representative findings:

- The implementation of child care incentives has escalated in recent years. Of the 204 programs surveyed, 52 percent were established within the past five years.
- Service industries, such as banking, finance, insurance, and health care are the most responsive in providing child care services; of these, the health care organizations account for the largest portion of programs offered. The service industries have traditionally employed large numbers of female workers. The continuation of this practice, plus the record number of women now working, may well account for this phenomenon.
- Child care initiatives are found in organizations of all sizes. Sixty-nine of the 204 programs studied were in organizations with fewer than 1,500 employees; 10 programs were located in companies with fewer than 150 workers.
- Geographical distribution is uneven. Organizations located in large metropolitan centers in the Northeast and North Central United States account for significantly greater numbers of child care programs, compared with other regions.
- What kinds of employers are now taking advantage of child care initiatives? Clearly, we have departed from the era when child care was directed at welfare recipients or low-pay blue collar families. Most workers now using child care classify themselves as professionals, managers, technicians, or service workers. Although the data indicate that both males and females make use of child care programs, the more extensive use by married women parallels the growing number of married women with young children in the labor force.
- New dimensions in the form of child care are developing. Work-site child care centers still represent the most common format, especially in health care organizations, even though on-site arrangements are more costly. At the same time, organizations are moving toward multiple combinations of initiatives: for example, alternative work schedules in combination with working parent seminars or with the purchase of child care slots in existing child care centers, or the provision of child care voucher systems in combination with information and referral services.
- Costs for child care initiatives vary significantly, depending on such factors as the type and scope of the initiative, geographic location, number of employees served within a specific period, program design, availability of outside funding sources, local and state regulations, and the like. The presence of a child care program does not imply, however, that an employer is bearing the total cost. Parent-employees are often satisfied with partial support, survey data suggest, and they take this support to indicate their employer is concerned with the needs of working parents.
- Why do employers get involved in child care initiatives? "The need to attract a talented, stable workforce" emerged as the primary motivation. Apparently, the initiatives do answer this need, as the next finding discloses.
- Asked to indicate what effects the child care initiative has had on the organization, respondents cited such items as "improved recruitment advantages," "improved employee morale," "decreased turnover," and "less absenteeism." Almost 100 percent of respondents saw the benefits as far outweighing the costs.
- What impact have the child care provisions of the Economic Recovery Tax Act of 1981 (ERTA) had on employer motivation? Respondents indicated that the desire to secure a more stable workforce was far more important than tax benefit incentives.

DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this study, we will use the following definitions:

Employer initiatives for child care: Any service or support provided by an employer to help parent-employees meet their child care needs. Also referred to in the literature as "employer-sponsored child care," "employer-supported child care," "employer-related child care," "industry-related child care," and "employer programs for child care."

Child care center: Facility that provides care for more than 10 children, often in a church, community center, or school. Most are licensed for children from ages two and a half to six, although care for children six weeks to thirty months is gradually becoming more available. A center provides a structured curriculum geared to the physical, intellectual, and social needs of the children.

Consortium: Group of employers who work together to develop and support a parent-employee child care program.

Family day care consortium: Family day care homes sponsored by a central administration that determines eligibility and makes placements. Training offered to providers and quality assessment can be additional benefits of satellite programs connected with consortiums.

Family day care home: Service that provides care for one to five children of varying ages in the care giver's home, emphasizing the developmental needs in the natural setting of a family. This is currently the main source of licensed care for infants and toddlers.

Group family day care home: Service that provides care for up to 10 children of varying ages in the care giver's home. This option maintains the natural setting of the home while offering the benefit of socializing with a fairly large group.

Infant care: Care for children up to 15 months.

How strongly the ERTA provisions will be felt in the future remains uncertain. We can infer that these provisions will continue to stimulate interest in child care. But the major motivation behind program implementation will stem from other concerns.

Taken together, the survey findings prompt a broader look at child care in America. As the next chapter suggests, this is not the first time in our history that corporate America has expressed a heightened interest in child care. But the previous periods of involvement were spurred by a particular national emergency: for example, a rapid influx of immigrant fami-

lies, the Great Depression, or a world war. In the past, then, child care was a kind of "relief service" aimed at correcting a particular problem. And when the problem diminished, the involvement in child care dissipated.

In contrast, the current interest in child care stems from conditions that will not change in the foreseeable future. The influx of more women into the workplace is likely to continue, dual-career families are here to stay, and the changes in family structure cited previously will remain with us for a long time. And as more organizations learn that such programs provide clear and quantifiable benefits for both

Information and referral: Resource to help parents identify and make child day care arrangements as well as to assist providers in filling open child care slots.

In-home care: Care of the child provided by a care giver in the child's own home.

Work-site child care: Services provided by the employer at or in close proximity to the employee's workplace. Also referred to in the literature as "on-site," or "off-site" child care.

Industry-related child care: Services provided by industry to help working parents meet their child care needs.

Parent-employee: The employee who is also a parent.

Alternative work patterns: "Encompasses all variations of the standard work schedule: that is, a work day from 8:00 or 9:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M., for seven or eight hours a day, five days a week" (Nollen & Martin, 1978).

Flexitime: Umbrella term covering a variety of arrangements that allow employees to depart from standard eight-hour, five-day, 9-to-5 work schedules. Requires an employee to work during certain "core" hours designated by the organization, for example, 9:30 to 3:00, and allows free choice for the remainder of the day—that is, freedom to choose to work longer or shorter hours on different days.

Flexible benefits: Arrangement that allows employees to choose benefits from a range of alternatives. Also referred to in the literature as "cafeteria benefits."

Latch-key children: Children who let themselves into the home after school while their parents are at work.

the company and the employees, the number of programs may well increase dramatically.

Also, prior efforts at child care involved little creativity and virtually no change in the structure of work. In contrast, current child care initiatives reveal far more imaginative strategies: voucher systems, working parent seminars, flexitime, and the like. As Kanter (1982) says, "If the tensions between work and family are to be resolved, it may be easier to alter work than alter the family."

Moreover, the increased interest in child care may represent only one part of a broader move-

ment toward work environments that are more people-oriented. Quality of worklife programs are gaining increased attention in the media, interest in participative management and employee involvement is at an all-time high, and well over 60 percent of the Fortune 500 corporations have implemented employee assistance programs, many in the past decade.

It may be impossible to develop a precise gauge for measuring how people-oriented American worklife is becoming. But, like child care initiatives, the innovations in quality of worklife and worker participation may signal a heightened awareness, on the part of top manage-

ment, that a people-orientation pays off for both employees and the company.

ENLIGHTENED SELF-INTEREST: THE OPERATIVE PHILOSOPHY

The interface of work and family is a complex issue. Throughout the United States, employers are becoming keenly aware that there is no single solution to the conflicting demands of earning a living and caring for a family. Nor is there a single solution to improving the quality of both work and family life. Employers are also aware that the problem of providing quality care for our most precious resource, our nation's children, cannot be solved by a single answer. However, there are those employers who are actively responding to this problem. For a variety of reasons, these employers are demonstrating resourcefulness and creativity in attempting to meet the changing needs of individuals and families. It has become apparent that the issues of job satisfaction and the opportunity for employees to achieve a satisfactory home life can no longer be divorced. Employers in growing numbers are recognizing their role in closing the gap between the two. They are becoming realistic futurists who are looking in their own backyards to fashion new and vital workplace relationships.

A growing number of organizations have created initiatives toward the implementation of child care programs for working parents, thus helping to reduce the potential conflict between work and family. In reducing the conflict, employers may look forward to recruiting the best available pool of talented workers, retaining valuable and qualified personnel, reducing absenteeism, and developing a pool of more satisfied employees, thus improving the quality of worklife.

The survey data reveal that these goals, when accomplished, create a synergism that achieves the more basic goal cited by employers for establishing child care initiatives—a more stable workforce.

The relationship of motivation and perceived benefit to the organization is significant. Employers can fulfill management's agenda (creating a talented, stable workforce) while meeting the needs of working parents.

Organizations see the needs of their parent-workers to be:

- Greater flexibility in the work-family relationship.
- Less conflict between work and family obligations.
- Greater freedom and more time with families.

Specifically, parent-employees want:

- High-quality child care programs.
- Child care arrangements of the parents' own choosing.
- Arrangements that ensure the safety of children and guarantee that someone is explicitly liable for their well-being and safety.
- Assistance and advice in achieving these priorities.
- Financial support in doing so.

How are these needs being met?

For one, our study suggests that managerial patterns at the workplace may be changing because management itself may be changing. Many of the managers of today were the "warriors" of the 1960s who were attempting to create The Great Society by asking for public and private sector participation in the social problems of the period. These new managers—protesters of the sixties—have become activists of the boardroom who are replacing corporate politics with a new social concern that reaches down to the grass roots of organizations—the needs of employees and, by extension, of the family.

Perhaps for the first time in our history, employers are beginning to *direct* social change. A Conference Board Report (1978), published as *The Present State of Corporate Responsibility*, noted that industrial corporations have always

been the slowest to respond to change because of conservative views of social responsibility, preoccupation with profit, and the national and international scope of their operations. The new managers may be bringing a less conservative, more humanistic style of management to the workplace which will shape organizations that are able to respond to their environments with greater resiliency.

The issues surrounding child care are not entirely new. Work and family life have always overlapped. In the past, initiatives by employers have been called a "miniature curiosity." Chapter 1 will review the history of the relationship of the American family to the workplace. It will also examine the influence of present societal conditions on this relationship in an attempt to understand the past and influence the future.

1

THE MERGER of WORK and FAMILY: A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Until recently, the history of child care initiatives in America was a story of sporadic attempts on the part of industry and patchwork legislation on the part of government. As subsequent chapters will reveal, the half-hearted efforts of the past are giving way to a new thrust, one that represents a serious commitment to policies linking the family and the workplace. A review of past efforts at child care in this country shows how significant this change is.

It was not until the period of industrialization, urbanization, and immigration (between 1840 and 1919) that the question of child care became an issue. Up until that time the family farm was the center of economic production, providing food, shelter, schooling, vocational training, and care for children. There was little conflict between the roles of parents as workers and as nurturers of the young. Individuals were not separated geographically and socially, and as a result, work and family did not constitute two separate worlds.

With industrialization, farm families migrated to the expanding cities out of economic necessity. Movement toward industrial centers often took women away from the home and into factories. It created distance, both geographically and socially, between families and work.

In addition, during this period, over five million

immigrants flocked to the United States from Europe. Many immigrant women desperately needed to work to supplement family income or to make up for the deficit caused by the early death or desertion of a spouse. A breakdown in family life and child rearing was occurring in unprecedented numbers.

THE BIRTH OF CHILD CARE

As a result of these conditions a host of organizations were created to care for the children of working mothers. Urban school systems, settlement houses, health departments, welfare agencies, and the day nursery, were all created in response to the problem of the immigrant family—that of attempting to survive in the industrial centers of the United States.

A pioneer response to the need for child care came about when the nurses of Childrens Hospital in New York opened a child care center for the children of working mothers who were hospital patients. By 1910, 450 child care centers had been established in cities. Some were sponsored by manufacturers, hospitals, settlement houses, and civic and religious groups.

In spite of the growth of the day nursery movement for immigrant families, it was not generally

accepted as the best way to accommodate children. The first White House Conference on Families, held in 1909, recommended pensions for mothers as a substitute for day care. By 1913, 32 states had laws that gave financial assistance to mothers. This legislation was enacted to encourage mothers to remain at home to care for their children; however, as in our contemporary society, the pension was not sufficient and many mothers continued to work.

The weakness that accompanied the day care movement and still prevails is that child care has consistently been viewed by society as an instrument to "repair breakdowns" or as a first-aid measure for families, when no other alternatives were available. This response has been sustained throughout U.S. history by those individuals who prefer that women remain in the home primarily as nurturers and child rearers, as well as by those who are concerned about the involvement of social, political, and economic institutions with family responsibilities.

WORLD WAR I AND THE GREAT DEPRESSION

Government's response to families during the Depression reflected neither consistent nor overwhelming concern. The Works Progress Administration (WPA) allocated government funds for the employment of nursery school teachers in WPA child care centers. While the WPA schools did not emphasize the care and nurturing of children (the emphasis was on the training and utilization of child care workers), they *did* represent the first recognition by the federal government that the education and guidance of young children was a responsibility warranting the appropriation of funds.

Nonetheless, little or no official action was taken to assure the care of children while mothers were at work during this period. Families responded to this need by establishing informal child care networks consisting of spouses, relatives, or neighbors.

World War I and the Great Depression were the beginning of work and family issues that are still being felt: the changing composition of the workforce, the continuing fear of working mothers who feel they have abdicated some of their child-rearing responsibilities, the economic necessity for both men and women to work while attempting to maintain a family, and the questions relating to public involvement in family issues.

WORLD WAR II AND POST WORLD WAR II

World War II not only changed the U.S. economy, it also changed family roles. It marked the beginning of a new era of public awareness of working mothers in the workforce and spurred federal investment in the children of these working women. Job vacancies left by men had to be filled, and women who stayed at home rather than fill them were regarded as "slackers."

PUBLIC SECTOR INITIATIVES

The Latham Acts of 1940 and 1941, which made special provisions for persons involved in national defense, also provided for community-based child care programs in defense plant areas. The centers were operated in public schools, in local school districts, and provided extended and Saturday hours for school age children.

The Kaiser Corporation in Portland, Oregon, developed what was perhaps the best known employer-sponsored child care program during the World War II years. In order to accommodate working mothers, the Kaiser Centers were open 24 hours a day and 12 months a year. They assumed responsibility for such things as shopping for mothers, making medical appointments, mending clothing, caring for children with minor illnesses, and even providing carryout dinners for families at a minimal cost.

CHILD CARE INITIATIVES FOR WORKING PARENTS

Unfortunately, the Congress that had declared appropriations for wartime activities and support for families also ceased these appropriations when the war ended. Latham Child Care Centers were closed in all states except California. As a result, families devised individual strategies to permit both mothers and fathers to work by once again developing a system of informal child care arrangements.

Between 1948 and 1966, women in the workforce with children under six years of age increased from about 11 percent to 24 percent. The trend that began in the post-World War II period has continued to the present.

THE GREAT SOCIETY: 1960-1974

A patchwork pattern of attitudes, reforms, and responses to the child care needs of the working parent continued in the 1960s and 1970s. Among them were Head Start, Follow Through, the Peace Corps, and other antipoverty programs. However, these programs often reinforced the already existing patterns of child welfare or relief services.

RESEARCH AND LEGISLATION TO ENCOURAGE INITIATIVES FOR CHILD CARE

Research conducted in 1968 by the United States Department of Labor and updated in 1976 by the Wells National Services Corporation studied the feasibility of a nationwide network of child care services for the children of hospital employees. The study results indicated that those hospitals operating child care centers for employees found the service to be an important employee advantage and that both employee and employer benefited through easier recruitment, increased retention, and lowered absenteeism.

In 1972 business was encouraged to sponsor on-

site child care centers by federal legislation that permitted a company to deduct from its income tax, over a five-year period, the expense of acquiring, constructing, reconstructing, or rehabilitating property for use as a child care facility, primarily by the children of employees.

PRIVATE SECTOR RESPONSES TO WORKING PARENTS

Interest in the quality of work life and family life has been reflected in the emergence of employer involvement in child care during the 1960s and 1970s. By 1973, 13 employers had opened work-site child care centers for the children of their employees and the children in surrounding communities.

Creative attempts at solving the needs of working parents were initiated by companies such as Polaroid and the Ford Foundation. In 1971, Polaroid set up one of the first child care voucher systems for their parent-employees earning under \$20,000 to help them with their child care needs. Polaroid initially contracted with licensed day care centers for the purchase of child care slots for the children of employees. Illinois Bell Telephone in Chicago aided working parents by instituting an information and referral service for finding satisfactory child care arrangements.

THE CHANGING AMERICAN FAMILY

The women's movement of the 1960s and 1970s is considered a major force affecting American family life. It began to challenge the burdens of the past that created child care as a welfare or relief service, and put a high priority on women workers and on quality child care. Feminists viewed the rearing of children as a *family* concern, not solely a woman's concern, and felt that quality child care was crucial for women's liberation.

Women are in the labor force to stay. They will

continue to work because of a need to survive economically, to raise their standard of living, to accommodate changing lifestyles, and for noneconomic reasons, like job satisfaction. Given women's traditional role as primary nurturers and child rearers, together with their growing desire to work outside the home, their present ambivalence about the merger of family and work may continue. Public and private sector initiatives that can reconcile work life and family life may be one answer to this problem.

CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY: 1975 TO PRESENT

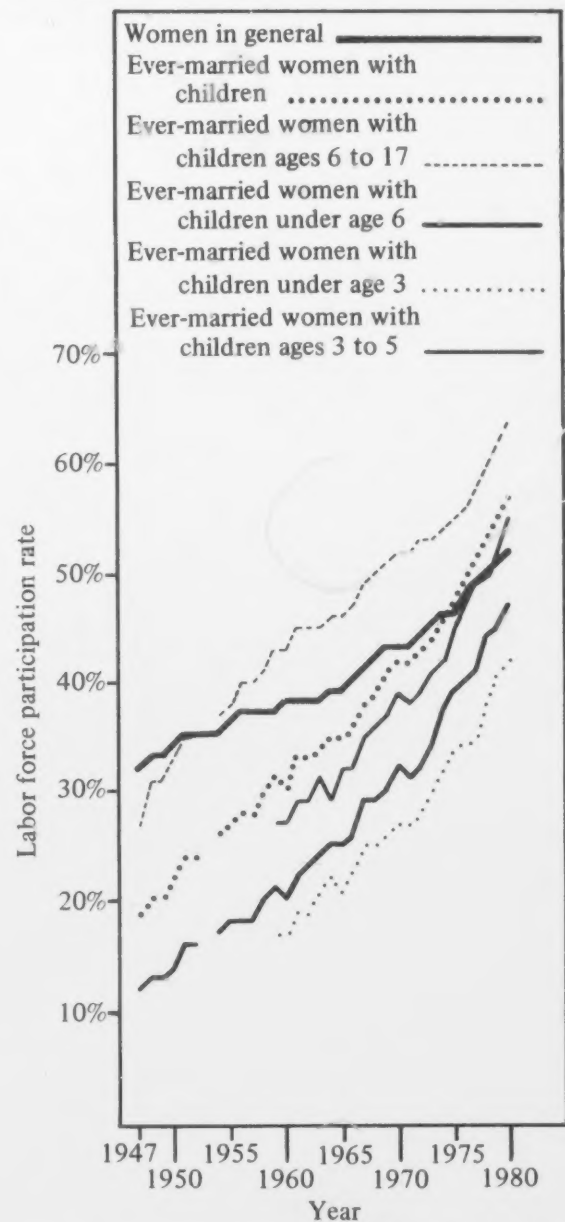
There is a growing concern among individuals and organizations about the economic health of the United States and as a result, a growing national preoccupation with lowered productivity. Profound changes in the contemporary family are largely related to the dramatic increase in the number of working mothers (see Figure 1). Current statistics relating to the family reveal the following:

- More than half the women living in families now are employed outside the home.
- Most women in the workforce are married and have children under the age of 18.
- Six million children under the age of 6 have mothers in the workforce.
- One out of every nine working mothers is the sole supporter of the family.
- From 1960 to 1978 there was a decline in two-parent families from 95 to 81 percent.
- Families have decreased in size over the past decade from 3.58 persons in 1970 to 3.22 persons in 1980. This trend is expected to continue during the 1980s.

With the changes in family and work life have come problems and concerns for employees and employers: the issue of work overload, parental desire to accommodate the legitimate needs of their employers, the need to nurture the young, the need to find fulfillment at the workplace, and the need to improve the quality of family life. As a result of an embryonic, but growing

awareness, a new level of interest, concern, and research is emerging to meet the needs of work and family.

Figure 1. Labor force participation rates of women.



SOURCE: *Employed parents and their children: A data book*. Washington, D.C.: Children's Defense Fund, 1982.

THE CHANGING WORKFORCE: EMPLOYEE NEEDS

The current research on changing employee values reflects a new direction: employers are finding it necessary to redefine the nature of work and family. Employees increasingly expect that companies will do something about their problems and complaints. A broader philosophy than prevailed in the past—that of mutual responsibility for individuals at work and at home—is vital to society. Employers will no longer be able to plead “noninvolvement in work-family issues.”

Those employers who recognize that there are no “quick fixes” for successfully linking work and family life are attempting to increase their awareness through participation in conferences dealing with work and family issues. Employers also recognize that there are no single solutions to improving the quality of work life and family life in a rapidly changing society.

CURRENT NATIONAL SURVEYS OF WORK-FAMILY LINKAGES

A number of national surveys have been conducted in an effort to gather information about the family, the workplace, and the merger of the two.

A major study was conducted by General Mills, Inc. (1980) entitled *Families at Work: Strengths and Strains*. This opinion survey was conducted by telephone with 1,503 adult family members (ages 18 and over), 235 teenagers (ages 13 to 18), 104 executives from Fortune 1300 Corporations, 56 labor leaders, 49 family traditionalists, and 52 feminists. The interviewers concluded that:

- Marriage and child rearing notwithstanding, a majority of women will continue to work outside the home.
- Meeting the demands of job, home, and

family places heavy demands on working mothers.

- Benefits such as maternity leave and leaves to attend to family and children would be of great help to working parents.
- Part-time work with full-time benefits appealed to many family members.
- People seeking career advancement have to expect to spend less time with families.
- A desire for employer recognition of the conflicting demands of work and family responsibilities was cited by family members.

In 1980 the Catalyst Career and Family Center conducted two national surveys entitled *Corporations and Two-Career Families: Directions for the Future*. The two populations surveyed were chief executive officers of Fortune 1300 corporations and 815 two-career couples. Respondents were asked about issues relating to two-career families. The results included the following:

- Corporations are concerned about two-career families because such a condition could affect recruitment, employee morale, and productivity.
- There was a gap between those corporations which favored innovative personnel practices and those which actually had them (73 percent of the respondents favored flexible work hours but only 37 percent of the companies offered them).
- Wives reported more physiological and psychological symptoms of stress than husbands did.
- Both husbands and wives indicated satisfaction with their marriage and somewhat less satisfaction with the way they were combining work and family.

Parents in the Workplace, in St. Paul, Minnesota, conducted a survey of 5,000 Minnesota businesses in 1981. Human resource personnel were surveyed with a 10 percent response rate. Questions dealt with current child care benefits, effects of child care on employee problems, and the employer's knowledge of child care. The principal finding was:

- More than two thirds of respondents felt that employer support for child care would have a positive effect on higher productivity, lowered absenteeism, easier recruitment, better retention, higher morale, and less tardiness.

In 1982 the Appalachian Regional Commission conducted research published as *Employer-Supported Child Care Study*, to determine the extent of employer involvement in child care within the Appalachian states. Some of the findings are presented here:

- Characteristics such as employer size, status in the community, employer type, community size, and the proportion of female employees all seem to be associated with employer involvement and interest in child care.
- The majority, 60 percent of programs surveyed, were located in urban areas. There appears to be little involvement by employers in rural regions.
- An employer's perception of need is one of the major considerations affecting the reasons employers choose to support or not support child care.
- Cost-benefit considerations seem to be the most important factors influencing employers or prohibiting them from starting a child care program.

FEASIBILITY OF EMPLOYER INITIATIVES FOR CHILD CARE

A current study by Friedman (1982) addressed the feasibility of employer involvement in child care and other family supports in three inter-related areas: parent needs, management agendas, and community resources. Friedman indicates that since management is the ultimate decision-maker, the needs of management must be satisfied. However, Friedman also indicates that "Corporate self-interest can only be met through an awareness of the needs and expectations of

employees." Through a case study of one service organization, Friedman examined the question of whether parent objectives (needs) were capable of encouraging employers to establish work policies for working parents. The results of the study highlight the need for an awareness of the reciprocal effects of both work and family agendas. Friedman stresses that with greater numbers of parents at work, parent needs will play an increasingly significant role in the recruitment and retention of a productive workforce and in the establishment of personnel policies to aid the working parents.

CURRENT FEDERAL LEGISLATION TO ENCOURAGE EMPLOYER INITIATIVES FOR CHILD CARE

New federal legislation to support families by means of child care programs provides for an increase in the deductible amount for child care tax credit. Taxpayers can now deduct \$480 for one child, up to a maximum of \$960 to \$1,440 for two children (for individuals whose incomes are above \$28,000 per year). For individuals with incomes below \$10,000, the maximum credit allowed is \$720.

The Dependent Care Assistance Program, which is part of the Economic Tax Recovery Act of 1981 (ERTA), provides help to working families by increasing tax benefits to employers. This program offers tax incentives to employers and employees who become involved in child care by treating child care assistance as a tax-free benefit for both employers and employees. As an initial step, employers should present their child care assistance policy to the Internal Revenue Service, in a separate written nondiscriminatory plan.

To qualify for tax-free status, the employer can do one of three things:

- Establish an on-site child care service
- Provide direct payment to a child care provider

CHILD CARE INITIATIVES FOR WORKING PARENTS

- Allow for direct reimbursement to employees

The cost of the service is not treated as part of employee wages. As a result the employer saves money by not paying FICA or other payroll taxes on the amount given to the employee for child care.

CONCLUSION

Present work and family conditions reflect increasing conflict between the demands of the two, underlined by the growing tension of families at work under the pressure of economic ills. The diversity in family patterns that began

during the period of The Great Society has increased during the last decade. Higher divorce rates have created a growing number of single-parent females who need to work. The fact that more mothers work changed the way in which many women allocate their time, the way they care for their children, and the way they view male and female roles in the family.

For working parents to bring up children successfully in our present society there must be adjustments at the workplace. Recent research indicates that the dramatic changes in families and contemporary society require—more than at any time in history—a new relationship between employers and employees. This relationship is developing, as the following chapters suggest.

2

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

In order to determine the current status of employer child care initiatives in the United States, it was first necessary to identify those employers in industry, labor unions, health care facilities, and government agencies that currently have such initiatives.

No national network of employers with child care initiatives exists in the United States. In order to compile a comprehensive list of sponsoring organizations, the researcher telephoned key resource people and agencies throughout the country. In many instances, a telephone call to one agency or resource person in a particular state yielded information about employers within the state who had created child care initiatives as well as the names of other key resource persons and agencies in the same state or in a neighboring state. Thus, an informal network of individuals, resources, and current information relating to employer initiatives was established. This informal network proved invaluable to the researcher in gathering data.

Some lists of those employers who had previously established work-site or off-site child care centers were available through materials published by the Women's Bureau of the United States Department of Labor (1972, 1981), the research study conducted by Senn-Perry (1978), the Business and Child Care Project of the Minneapolis Day Care Association (1981), and the

Appalachian Regional Commission Report (1981). These lists were validated by telephone calls. (About one fifth of the information proved to be incorrect—information about the location of a center, for example, or about the organization's involvement in a child care consortium.)

When telephone calls to resource persons and agencies were completed, existing lists validated, current written materials explored, and the information synthesized, the identification process was concluded. The list of 504 organizations became known as the survey population.

SELECTION

These criteria guided the selection of the survey sample from among the programs identified:

- A *variety* of employer initiatives, as opposed to only employer-sponsored, on-site, or near-site child care centers.
- Examples of programs in all regions of the United States.
- Examples of programs in industry, health care facilities, unions, and government agencies.
- Examples of programs in a diversity of organizations, taking into account number of

CHILD CARE INITIATIVES FOR WORKING PARENTS

people employed and a variety of employee occupations.

Two types of programs were excluded:

- Those sponsored by educational institutions, because such programs often serve as laboratory schools (Nezenholtz, 1977).
- Those in military installations, because they often serve as "drop in" or evening custodial centers (Cargill, 1977).

INSTRUMENTATION

Some items from previous questionnaires that dealt with employer-sponsored child care were included in the survey instrument, along with items designed specifically for this study. The survey instrument included questions in the following five areas:

1. The sponsoring organization
 - a. Location
 - b. Services or goods produced
 - c. Number of persons employed
 - d. Number of parent-employees utilizing the program
 - e. Organizational structure
 - f. Organization's involvement in child care initiatives
2. Motivation for implementation
 - a. Economic factors
 - b. Major considerations for establishing a child care initiative
 - c. Policies/procedures regarding child care initiatives
3. Perceived benefits to employers
 - a. Conflicts
 - b. Benefits vs. costs to employers
 - c. Perceived effects on the sponsoring organizations
4. Costs
 - a. Start-up costs
 - b. Operating costs
 - c. Financial considerations to assure ongoing program operation

Table 1. Summary of special features of work-site child care centers.

<i>Special feature</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
Professional counseling for children	27	13.0
Professional counseling for parents	61	30.0
Parent resource center	41	20.0
Parent-employee discussion groups	72	35.0
Library center for parents and children	35	17.0
Baby room for nursing mothers	58	28.0
Specialists	47	23.0
Multigenerational program	33	16.0
Parent visitations	48	24.0
Job sharing	16	8.0
Flexitime	17	8.0
Bilingual staff	22	11.0
Transportation	24	12.0
Meals	138	68.0
Breakfast	101	50.0
Lunch	125	61.0
Snack	134	66.0
Dinner	51	25.0
Medical services	56	28.0
Dental services	10	5.0
Other: (Special services for handicapped children, infant-toddler programs, open till 12:00 P.M., summer day camp program)		

Note: *N* = Number of child care centers that have the special feature.

% = Percentage of child care centers that have the special feature.

5. Special features of the program
Special features reported by survey respondents are summarized in Table 1.

Questions about the days and hours of child care center operations, teaching staff, child-staff ratios, and physical plants were not included.

These items have been covered in earlier studies that primarily addressed issues of on-site child care centers (Senn-Perry, 1978; Women's Bureau, U.S. Department of Labor, 1972, 1981).

REVIEW OF THE INSTRUMENT BY EXPERTS

Eleven experts were asked to respond to the initial questionnaire. The experts included two chief executive officers of organizations in the private sector that currently have child care initiatives, two directors of human resources of organizations that currently have child care initiatives, two health care administrators of health care facilities that currently have child care initiatives, one director of an employer-sponsored child care center, two statisticians, and two child care experts who consult with industry on issues relating to work and family life. These individuals were excluded from the survey population because they were part of the initial questionnaire development. All experts were asked to complete the initial questionnaire. This was accomplished by means of personal interviews. After completing the initial questionnaire, each expert was asked to evaluate it on the basis of the following items:

1. How much time did it take to complete the questionnaire?
2. Did any questions appear inappropriate? If so, which ones?
3. Were any questions ambiguous? If so, which ones?
4. Were any questions too long, too short? If so, which ones?
5. Did any questions ask for information that might not be available to a respondent? If so, which ones?
6. Should any questions be changed to elicit more information? If so, which ones?
7. Should any questions be changed to elicit different information? If so, which ones?
8. Were some questions too personal? If so, which ones?

9. Additional comments or opinions.

Minor revisions were made on the initial questionnaire on the basis of the expert's comments and suggestions. The final questionnaire, entitled "Employer Initiatives for Child Care: Perceived Benefits to Employers," was a more concise and professional tool for eliciting the required data. It consisted of eight pages, divided into five major sections, all parts to be filled out by the survey population. All items, except for three open-ended questions, requested respondents to check specific boxes or fill in numbers in the appropriate places (see Appendix A).

PROCEDURES

I sent the revised questionnaire to the survey population in July 1982, accompanied by Cover Letter I (see Appendix B). This letter requested participation and emphasized the purpose of the study, the confidentiality of the results, and the importance of each organization's response. A stamped, self-addressed return envelope facilitated prompt return of the questionnaire.

Each cover letter and mailing envelope was addressed to an individual responsible for child care. Recipients included individuals in the following categories: chief executive officers, directors of personnel or human resources, benefits counselors, and health care administrators. I did not mail letters to child care directors of work-site or off-site day care programs because these individuals are usually responsible for administering the child care center, but are not directly responsible for policy making within the sponsoring organization, and probably would not have access to much of the information requested in the survey questionnaire. Every employer identified as a member of a child care consortium was sent an individual Cover Letter I and a questionnaire in order to elicit the personal responses of individual organizations.

I conducted a second mailing in September 1982. All employers who did not respond to the first

mailing received Cover Letter II and an additional copy of the questionnaire. Cover Letter II was the same as Cover Letter I except for one addition. Cover Letter II defined "employer initiatives for child care" as "any service or support provided by an employer to aid working parents with their child care needs." This change was made because some of the early respondents were confused about the meaning of the term.

RESPONSE RATE

A total of 504 surveys were sent to potential survey respondents in 48 states and the District of Columbia. Of the 504 potential survey respondents, 282 organizations (56 percent) responded to the questionnaire in full or in part. The 282 organizations represented organizations in 41 states and the District of Columbia. Of the 282 respondents, 204 returns from 34 states and the District of Columbia were considered usable. The remaining 78 surveys were eliminated for a variety of reasons. Three organizations went out of business in late 1981; 12 respondents reported that they had been incorrectly identified as an organization currently offering child care initiatives for working parents; 18 respondents reported donations to child care centers, but viewed this donation as philanthropic; 14 respondents reported that their child care programs were no longer in operation (see Table 2); 31 respondents were in the process of conducting feasibility studies to assess the child care needs of parent employees, and asked to be contacted at a later date to compare the results of this study with their findings.

Of the 14 respondents reporting that their child care programs were no longer in operation, all had been involved with on-site and off-site child care centers.

The findings indicated that child care programs, for the most part, had not closed because of problems encountered as a result of the programs. In all cases the organizations reported that the employer-sponsored child care centers

Table 2. Reasons cited by employers for closing child care programs.

<i>Reason</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
Child care center attracted highly skilled personnel, but was not economically feasible	2	14
Current economic factors suspended operations temporarily	3	21
Lack of continued funding from state and federal agencies	4	30
Drop in the use of program by employees; if the need becomes apparent once again, the organization will consider re-starting the program.	2	14
Company sold—new policies and procedures implemented that changed child care policy	1	7
Support of local child care center that went out of business—company looking at other options for employers	2	14
Total	14	100

had been a benefit to both employee and employer while they were in operation.

Of the 204 respondents, 69 percent were from individuals whose position titles fell within the five categories listed previously. The importance of having administrative personnel from the sponsoring organizations respond to the survey instrument was based on the assumption that these individuals would have easy access to the necessary information and could readily respond to the important questions relating to organization.

Of the remaining 31 percent of the respondents, 26 percent represented child care directors, those individuals in charge of work-site child care centers. The additional 5 percent represented coordinators of work-family programs or child care consultants.

The responses from the child care directors presented some problems for data analysis. The surveys returned by these respondents were usually incomplete on Items A-4, A-10, D-4, and D-6 (see Appendix A), perhaps indicating lack of information, little coordination, or poor communication between the work-site child care center and the sponsoring organization. Lack of communication between child care directors and the sponsoring organization may prove to be a problem for the long-term operation of work-site child care centers.

Child care directors also represented 5 percent of the population contacted during the telephone interview process, described in the next section. None of the child care directors could provide additional information relating to the unanswered survey items. Child care directors reported that the survey instrument was sent to them by an individual within the sponsoring organization who asked that they complete the survey by the date specified and return it to the researcher. It is important to note that in sponsoring organizations where there is an on-site or off-site child care center, issues relating to child care are immediately turned over to the child care director. However, the primary function of child care directors, as reported by them, is the administration of the child care center, nothing more.

TELEPHONE INTERVIEWS WITH RESPONDENTS

Two months after the first mailing, the researcher conducted telephone interviews with 10 percent of the respondents, chosen at random. Selected questions from the questionnaire were asked again for validation purposes, and both sets of responses were compared. Individuals frequently offered additional information related to the

open-ended items. The items most often mentioned dealt with new policies and procedures then in preparation. Individuals also responded with information about future plans for child care programs. All comments and experiences were recorded.

The researcher also used this opportunity to present questions that had been left unanswered on the questionnaire. However, no additional data of any significance was forthcoming as a result of this procedure.

TELEPHONE INTERVIEWS WITH NONRESPONDENTS

The researcher telephoned an additional 10 percent of the survey population, individuals who had not responded to either the first or second mailing. The criteria for selecting the 10 percent were:

1. To include responses from an area of the country not yet represented in the return group.
2. To include responses from individuals in an industry, health care facility, government agency, or union not represented in the return group.
3. To include an organization previously identified as a pioneer in the area of employer initiatives for child care.
4. To clarify whether a response from a consortium represented a single employer or the entire consortium.
5. To clarify whether the correct individual received the questionnaire.

The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, frequency distribution, and cross tabulations.

3

WHO SPONSORS—and WHO USES—CHILD CARE INITIATIVES?

There appears to be no “typical” organization in the work world. Companies differ on the basis of the services performed or the goods produced, the organizational structure, the size of the organization according to sales volume, production, the number of employees, and the like.

Recall that we selected the survey sample to represent this diversity. Indeed, the distribution of data among a variety of organizations provided a wealth of information. In some cases, the data offered statistical confirmation of trends already known to exist: for example, that the majority of child care incentives are concentrated in service and health care industries. In other instances, the data led to surprises that clearly contradict prior research: for example, that companies of all sizes, even those with fewer than 100 or 200 employees, are successfully implementing programs. Let's take a closer look at what the overall distribution shows.

TYPES OF ORGANIZATIONS

The 204 survey respondents represented four basic categories of employers: industry (manufacturing and nonmanufacturing), labor unions, government agencies, and health care facilities. Fifty-two percent of the responses came from health care facilities, 43 percent from industry

(manufacturing as well as service), 4 percent from government agencies, and one percent from labor unions.

HEALTH CARE ORGANIZATIONS

Health care facilities (traditionally, not-for-profit organizations) are currently the largest supporters and providers of services to working parents in the area of child care, with industry as the second largest provider. This is in keeping with earlier research studies by Friedman (1981) and Senn-Perry (1978), indicating that because health care facilities employ a female intensive workforce, because acute nursing shortages exist, and because the need for recruitment and retention of health care personnel is strong, there is a growing response on the part of health care administrators to find ways to accommodate their parent-employees. Friedman (1981) reports that child care is a fringe benefit that may help alleviate the high turnover rate among nursing personnel.

The number of industries and health care facilities with child care initiatives in place has increased. In 1978 Senn-Perry, in her *Survey and Analysis of Employer-Sponsored Day Care in the United States*, reported 9 industries and 75 hospitals involved in work-site child care centers.

An updated report by the Women's Bureau of the United States Department of Labor (1981) reported 74 hospital centers and 12 industry centers.

NONMANUFACTURING ORGANIZATIONS

With the movement of society toward a postindustrial or "high tech" era, and the change from a goods-producing economy to a service economy, it is not surprising that the majority of organizations reporting child care initiatives fell within the nonmanufacturing classification, specifically the category listed as medical, health care, and nonprofit organizations. Finance and insurance organizations represented 12 percent of the organizations, while the remaining 11 percent was distributed among a variety of categories within the nonmanufacturing area (for example, temporary help service, land development, consulting services).

The Children's Defense Fund (1981) reports that almost 29 percent of the total employee labor force is in the nonmanufacturing (service) sector. During the 1980s, the service sector will continue to grow at a faster rate than manufacturing facilities, according to all predictions.

Like health care organizations, service industries have traditionally employed a large proportion of female workers. Again, this may account for the high percentage of nonmanufacturing organizations currently involved in child care. Figure 2 shows the distribution of the female labor force by occupation and the percentage in each class (Smith, 1979).

MANUFACTURING ORGANIZATIONS

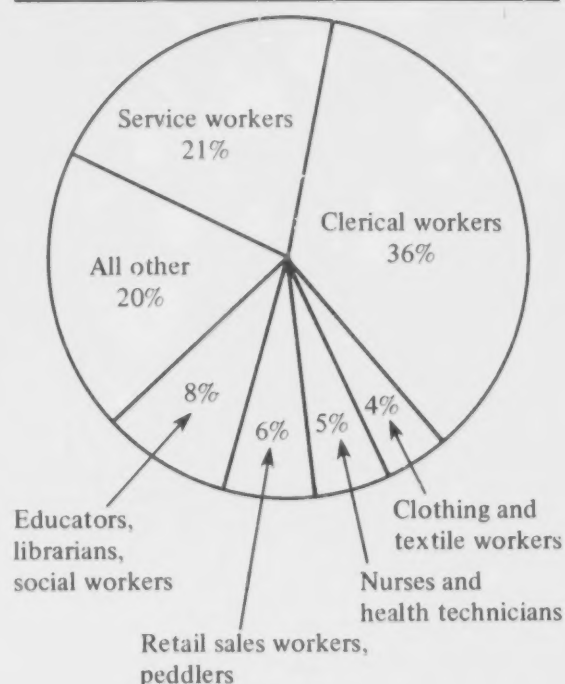
Only 30 percent of the total U.S. labor force is currently engaged in manufacturing (United States Department of Commerce, 1980). The lower response rate from the manufacturing sec-

tor (21 percent) reflects this shrinking segment of the workforce. These organizations represented a variety of industries, with the largest percentages coming from apparel, electronics, food, aerospace, computers, chemicals, photographic equipment, and pharmaceuticals.

LOCATION OF SPONSORING ORGANIZATIONS

Most of the organizations (66 percent) were located in suburban settings, and an additional 6 percent in rural areas. The urban responses were distributed evenly among those metropolitan

Figure 2. Occupational profile of the female labor force, 1977.



Percentage of worker groups that are female

Clerical workers	79%	Sales clerks, etc.	67%
Service workers	63%	Nurses, etc.	83%
Educators, etc.	64%	Textile workers, etc.	76%

CHILD CARE INITIATIVES FOR WORKING PARENTS

Table 3. Geographic summary of total civilian labor force employment in the states¹ and the number of organizations reporting child care initiatives.

<i>Geographic area</i>	<i>Total employed persons¹</i>	<i>Total of organizations reporting initiatives</i>
<i>Northeast</i>	23,390,009	62
New England	7,756,843	25
Middle Atlantic	15,633,166	37
<i>North Central</i>	25,180,910	68
East	17,833,067	34
West	7,347,843	34
<i>South</i>	31,808,884	45
South Atlantic	15,898,622	22
East South Atlantic	5,746,625	10
West South Atlantic	10,163,637	13
<i>West</i>	19,049,364	29
Mountain	4,907,467	6
Pacific	14,141,897	23
Total	99,429,167	204

¹United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census, *Provisional Estimates of Social, Economic, and Housing Characteristics, 1980*.

areas with large numbers of organizations and the greatest numbers of people employed. Table 3 presents the geographic summary of the total civilian labor force employment in the states and the number of organizations reporting initiatives within the geographic regions.

Of the four regions in the United States (Northeast, North Central, South, and West), the Northeast and North Central represented a total of 64 percent of the organizations that reported child care initiatives. Table 4 summarizes the overall geographic distribution.

Although America's geographic industrial center is shifting from New England and the Middle Atlantic to what is known as the "Sun Belt," organizations located in the South and West are lagging behind other regions in establishing child care initiatives. The "trend setting" effect postulated by Naisbitt (1982) is not reflected in the geographic distribution presented here. Perhaps the South with its boom in condominiums and

vacation homes does not attract families with children in need of child care initiatives. The South does, in fact, attract the nation's senior citizen population. (In 1980, Florida had more senior citizens than any other state.)

We would expect, however, that the growth in service industries necessary to accommodate the population explosion in the South would spur a need for younger workers and, consequently, an increase in child care initiatives.

The Pacific West region has shown little involvement in the area of work-family issues. The "traditional" industrial centers of the Northeast appear to take the lead among those organizations involved in child care initiatives.

SIZE OF SPONSORING ORGANIZATIONS

Survey respondents represented organizations

Table 4. Geographic distribution of organizations reporting child care initiatives.

<i>Geographic area</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
<i>Northeast</i>	<u>62</u>	<u>30.4</u>
New England	25	12.3
Middle Atlantic	37	18.1
<i>North Central</i>	<u>68</u>	<u>33.4</u>
East North Central	34	16.7
West North Central	34	16.7
<i>South</i>	<u>45</u>	<u>22.1</u>
South Atlantic	22	10.8
East South Atlantic	10	4.9
West South Atlantic	13	6.4
<i>West</i>	<u>29</u>	<u>14.2</u>
Mountain	6	2.9
Pacific	23	11.3
Total	204	100.1

that employed as few as five and as many as 198,000 employees. No single standard seems to exist for defining medium or large size organizations. Standard Industrial Classifications (SIC) of industries use annual sales volume as a standard, and some SIC industries use number of employees as a criterion. A small manufacturer of apparel may employ a workforce of 500 whereas a large hospital may have only 300 beds and a small clothing store may have 1.5 million in sales volume.

Because the research was concerned with people, the number of employees seemed to be the most appropriate measure of size. Table 5 presents the range of organizations, using this criterion.

The size of the organization by number of employees clearly does not determine whether an organization is likely to implement child care initiatives. Apparently, organizations of every size are aware of the conflicts affecting working parents. This conclusion contrasts with earlier findings, which indicated (contrary to the popular stereotype of small organizations) that small

Table 5. Summary of employer involvement in child care by number of employees in the sponsoring organization.

<i>Number of employees</i>	<i>Organizations reporting</i>
1- 149	10
150- 299	6
300- 449	5
450- 599	9
600- 749	6
750- 899	5
900-1049	8
1050-1199	7
1200-1349	8
1350-1499	5
1500-1649	6
1650-1799	7
1800-1949	6
1950-2099	5
2100-2249	7
2250-2399	4
2400-2449	6
2500-2699	3
2700-2849	4
2850-2999	6
3000-3149	2
3150-3299	2
3300-3449	2
3450-3599	3
3600-3749	3
3750-3899	2
3900-4049	1
4100-4249	2
4250-4399	0
4400-4549	1
4550-4699	4
4700-4849	1
4850-4999	0
5000-5149	0
5150-5299	0
5300-5449	0
5500-5649	3
5650-5799	1
6000-6149	3
6250-6399	1
6400-6549	3
6600-6749	4
6750-6899	0

CHILD CARE INITIATIVES FOR WORKING PARENTS

Table 5. (Continued)

<i>Number of employees</i>	<i>Organizations reporting</i>
6900-7049	0
7050-7199	1
7200-7349	4
7350-7499	1
7500-7649	0
7700-7849	0
7850-7999	2
8000-8149	0
8200-8349	1
8350-8499	0
8500-8649	3
8650-8799	1
8800-8949	5
8950-9099	2
9100-20,000	14
20,000 and over	8
Total	204

organizations pay attention to workers as payroll entries and not as members of households (Bell, 1982).

WHO USES CHILD CARE PROGRAMS?

The sponsoring organizations represented employers of all categories as outlined in the Equal Employment Opportunity Guidelines (United States Department of Labor, 1980): officials, managers, professionals, technicians, sales workers, clerical workers, skilled craft workers, unskilled operators, laborers, and service workers. The largest percentage of employees represented by the sponsoring organizations were professionals, managers, and technical and service workers. This finding suggests a new trend that departs from the traditional association of child care involvement with relief services for welfare recipients.

The current profile of the *total* labor force of the organizations sponsoring child care incentives reveals that, as a group, they are employed in

Table 6. Status of the total labor force of the sponsoring organizations by occupation and the total users of the child care initiatives.

<i>Occupation</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Users</i>
Officials/managers	30,299	686
Professionals and managers	52,889	3,136
Technicians	22,464	1,170
Sales workers	2,192	26
Craft workers (skilled)	11,057	284
Operatives (semiskilled)	13,776	295
Clerical	68,145	1,079
Laborers (unskilled)	4,251	630
Service workers	14,318	360
Other	24,114	67
Total	243,505	7,733

such occupational categories as professionals, managers, technicians, and clerical and service workers (see Table 6). A relationship exists among the number of "users" of the child care initiatives and the *total* number of individuals employed within specific occupational categories. Of the "users" of the child care initiatives, both males and females were represented (see Table 7). More women, specifically married women, utilize the child care initiatives than any other group. This distribution is representative

Table 7. Status of the labor force by sex and marital status of all employees who are using the child care program at the sponsoring organization.

	<i>Number</i>
Men	817
Single	136
Married	681
Women	6,916
Single	1,310
Married	5,606
Total	7,733

of national statistics that report increased participation in the labor force by married women with young children.

ADMINISTRATION OF CHILD CARE PROGRAMS

Sixty-eight percent of the respondents reported that the personnel or human services department or another administrative department within the sponsoring organization designated to deal with employee work-related concerns was responsible for administering child care initiatives. Given that most employees have direct contact with a personnel or human services department, and that in most companies the function of these departments is to enhance employer-employee relations (which could range from wage issues, supervisory issues, work hours, and job satisfaction), this arrangement fits well within the organizational structure of most firms.

Other person(s) or departments that administer these services include: independent child care corporations (when employers contracted for an outside corporation to provide a work-site child care center or participated in a child care consortium); the directors of child care centers (when employers sponsored work-site child care centers); and directors of nursing (in hospitals), who were sometimes given the responsibility for administering the child care initiative.

CHILD CARE POLICIES WITHIN ORGANIZATIONS

Fifty-two percent of respondents reported having formal, written child care policies as part of organizational policies and procedures. Another 13 percent reported that the organization was in the process of writing a policy for child care, and 31 percent reported no formal policy for child care. (Four percent did not respond.)

4

NEW DIRECTIONS in CHILD CARE INITIATIVES

In the past, organizational involvement in child care most often came in the form of on-site child care centers. Although these centers still represent the most commonly used approach, respondents report that child care arrangements are becoming increasingly multidimensional: Organizations are now offering a wider array of options, either singly or in combinations.

This new diversity suggests that many organizations are tailoring their programs to fit specific company and family needs. At the same time, the initiatives may provide answers to a number of practical concerns. In some firms, the programs may be founded on the hope that they will boost morale—almost always a prerequisite to higher productivity. Simultaneously, the initiatives can help reduce waste in fringe-benefit packages drafted during the era of one-breadwinner families. Moreover, as research by the Children's Defense Fund (1981) indicates, both men and women will become less "flexibly available" in the future. Perhaps some organizations are already feeling the pressure of this trend.

WEIGHING YOUR OPTIONS

This chapter looks at the multiple initiatives reported by the survey respondents: information and referral services in combination with

working-parent seminars; alternative work schedules that include a range of options (maternity/paternity leave in combination with flexitime, for example, or part-time work with benefits); or donation of services or goods to outside child care organizations in combination with flexible benefits programs. For a significant number of respondents, many of these incentives are offered in addition to on-site child care.

CHILD CARE CENTERS

These centers still appear to be the most widely used employer initiatives for child care. *Sixty-nine percent of the respondents reported that their organizations provided child care centers located at the workplace or relatively close by—an average of one to four miles away.* In addition, this 69 percent includes responses from 27 companies involved with child care consortiums; each consortium represents a group of employers supporting a single child care program.

There is, however, increasing concern over whether work-site child care centers are the best response to parent-employee needs. Friedman (1982) reports that parents who have to commute to the work site each day may not want to travel on public transportation with young children, especially during commuter rush hours.

The National Child Care Consumer's Study (UNCO) (1975) states that parents prefer child care in their own neighborhoods, and many favor informal arrangements such as family child care homes.

The cost of a work-site child care center may be a deterrent to many employers. Because of this prohibitive factor, employers may be discouraged from looking at other options for child care that would meet employee-employer needs and would incur relatively little cost as well.

The cost factor is one reason that employers are forming child care consortiums. These consortiums reduce costs by allowing more than one organization to share in the responsibilities of a child care center. Those respondents who were participating in consortiums reported that they were satisfied with this approach to child care.

INFORMATION AND REFERRAL SERVICES

Fifty percent of the respondents indicated that their organizations provide information and referral services relating to child care providers in the community. Of that 50 percent, half reported in-house information and referral services and the other half reported involvement with an outside resource referral agency.

Since a national network of child care information is not available to parents, they must rely on informal networks, "hearsay" information, or information from local colleges or universities offering early childhood programs. Locating a high-quality child care program is costly, time consuming, and often frustrating to parents. Parents responding to the UNCO Survey (1975) expressed the need for "a referral system where parents could get information about screened, qualified people and agencies to provide child care."

Employers who fund their own information and referral systems or contribute to a community

system are helping parent-employees (as well as others in the community).

VOUCHERS—PURCHASE OF CHILD CARE SLOTS

Another 11 percent of the respondents indicated that their involvement in child care is through a voucher system, the purchase of care at existing child care centers. The purchase of slots allows the employer to reserve space in a selected child care center and then pay for all or a portion of the reserved spaces. Under this voucher system, an employer reimburses the employee for all or part of the child care arrangements of the employee's choice. The employer has minimal involvement in this initiative, and it can also accommodate those organizations which have more than one work site or which employ individuals on a seasonal schedule.

Because vouchers allow parents to afford high-quality child care—and child care of their own choosing—this system alleviates some of the stress and guilt that many parents experience when leaving children in someone else's care during the day. This system is most effective, of course, when the supply of quality child care programs is sufficient to meet the demands.

ALTERNATIVE WORK PATTERNS

Fifty-five percent of the respondents had in place one or more alternative work patterns for parent-employees. Alternative work patterns, including flexitime, flexiplace, job-sharing, paternity leave, maternity leave, and part-time work with benefits, are increasing in popularity in the United States (Nollen & Martin, 1978). All or a combination of these alternatives can allow parents more freedom, less conflict between work and family obligations, and more time with families (Best, 1982). The most popular options reported by respondents were flexitime, maternity

CHILD CARE INITIATIVES FOR WORKING PARENTS

leave with benefits, and permanent part-time work with benefits. Flexiplace, paternity leave, and job sharing are still relatively new to the workplace. These were not reported by the sponsoring organizations in any significant numbers.

FLEXIBLE OR CAFETERIA BENEFITS

Six percent of the respondents to this survey reported flexible benefits that included child care. Many organizations in the United States have flexible benefits plans, but few have plans that specifically include child care as an option. Because cafeteria benefits programs allow employees to select from a variety of incentives in order to meet their personal needs, this approach seems especially helpful to working parents. Many employees who have child care needs now will not have these same needs 10 years from now.

The flexible benefits approach and alternative work arrangements are not without their problems, however. The expenditure of time and the extensive paperwork called for to organize, implement, and control these programs can cause strain on traditional management procedures, many respondents report. However, if work and family are to be successfully merged, employers may need to reconsider the "traditional" benefits management.

WORKING-PARENT SEMINARS

Eighteen percent of the respondents reported working-parent seminars, programs that provide parent education during working hours. The merger of work and family is a complex issue.

Dealing with the interface of the two requires as much information as possible. Working-parent seminars help parents to alleviate anxiety by providing a mechanism for sharing information, understanding child development, and minimizing guilt associated with the opposing demands of work and family life. All respondents noted that the seminars were well received and widely supported by parents and employers.

BEFORE- AND AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMS FOR SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN

Although child care centers are primarily established for the preschool child, 23 percent of the respondents reported that they attempt to accommodate the needs of parents with school-age children by offering programs at work-site child care centers before and after scheduled public school hours and during summer vacations.

FAMILY DAY CARE HOMES

A small, but growing number of employers are involved in family day care homes. This involvement may include assistance in the training of neighborhood family day care providers, an equipment loan service, or a variety of in-kind provisions. Family day care homes help those working parents who prefer that their children remain in the neighborhood during the work day.

Other provisions for child care reported by organizations included in-kind services to outside child care programs, as well as counseling services for parent-employees and children and automatic salary deductions for employees for payment of child care services.

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WHAT DO EMPLOYERS HAVE to GAIN?

One of the main purposes of the study was to find out what motivated employers to set up child care programs—given what at first glance might seem to be major cost-benefit uncertainties. And, more important, the study sought to discover whether they felt that they had achieved their goals. Has the investment paid off? This chapter examines employers' specific reasons for launching their programs, some of the major considerations in implementing the programs once the decision to go ahead had been made, and finally, the results as the employers see them.

THE INITIAL MOTIVATION

In order to gain a general understanding of why employers implement child care initiatives, the sponsoring organizations were asked to rank order their five most important reasons for creating such programs. In addition to the items listed on the questionnaire (see Appendix A), respondents had the opportunity to write in (and rank) other concerns.

The findings (see Table 8) suggest that employers appear to be motivated, at first, by a desire to create a more talented, stable workforce. Other factors involved in an employer's decision to create child care initiatives include an increased social consciousness and awareness, a need to

improve personnel relations, a desire to be responsive to employee groups, and self-interest, as reported by Friedman (1981, 1982).

Employer social awareness and responsibility, which is among the top rankings for motivation, adds a new dimension to the workplace. Managerial patterns may be changing at the workplace because management may be changing. Friedman (1982), in a current study, emphasizes that many organizations are now being run by more entrepreneurial risk-taking individuals who typically employ a humanistic managerial approach and are less conservative about benefits, personnel policies, and other factors that influence their organizations' human resources philosophy.

In addition, the configuration of the workforce is changing. A dramatic increase in the number of women with children under the age of six has occurred over the last 10 years (see Table 9). It is predicted that by 1990, 47 percent of the total labor force will be female (Children's Defense Fund, 1982). In the future, parent-employees will no longer be mostly males. These factors are compelling employers to address the issues and concerns of a new and evolving workforce by implementing child care initiatives.

This changing workforce also has changing needs that impinge on performance at work. Parent-employees, especially women, now have to man-

Table 8. Summary of ranked responses for motivation for all survey respondents and the weighted sum.

Responses	Rank					W + Sum ¹
	1	2	3	4	5	
Improved position to attract talented employees	46	36	29	21	16	519
Better personnel relations	25	31	40	37	18	476
Desire to create more stable workforce	44	18	23	26	30	443
Social consciousness and awareness	43	18	23	26	30	433
Encouragement from employees	19	23	34	34	18	375
Recommendation of employee task force	10	14	10	10	13	177
Economic gains to company	3	8	4	9	10	87
Child advocacy	1	1	3	1	8	28
Equality of benefits	0	2	3	4	2	27
Tax incentives	3	0	1	1	3	23
Union pressures or negotiations	2	2	1	0	1	22
Pressure to follow examples	1	0	1	0	9	17
Other	0	2	0	0	0	8
Federal, state, local legislation	0	0	0	2	0	4

¹The formula for determining the weighted sum is as follows:

$$WS = Nr_1 (5) + Nr_2 (4) + Nr_3 (3) + Nr_4 (2) + Nr_5 (1)$$

Nr_1 = The number giving the item a rank of one

Nr_2 = The number giving the item a rank of two

Nr_3 = The number giving the item a rank of three

Nr_4 = The number giving the item a rank of four

Nr_5 = The number giving the item a rank of five

The weights 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 serve to invert the scale so that a large score is preferred.

age the conflict associated with the dual role of parent as worker and nurturer of the young. The increase of one-parent families (also mostly women) with young children is another factor prompting organizations to become involved in child care issues.

Interestingly, 52 percent of the child care initiatives now in place were implemented within the past five years. This finding suggests that employers, recognizing that a new workforce is emerging, have begun to respond to its unique set of needs. The Appalachian Regional Commission (1982), in their *Employer-Supported Child Care Study*, which surveyed employers in the Appalachian Region, noted that employers support child care primarily because they perceive a need for the initiative. The findings of this

study suggest that the major factor in this perception is the proportion of women employed. Other factors besides employee need are the availability of local child care, the response from competitors to child care, employee turnover, absenteeism, and employee morale. The Appalachian Regional Commission Study also concluded that there are potential benefits to employers as well as employees. Factors that prohibited employers in the Appalachian Region from implementing child care initiatives were cost/benefit considerations.

CENTRAL CONCERNS

All survey respondents were asked to check the

Table 9. Labor force participation of ever-married women with children under age 6, 1970-1980.

Year	Number in labor force	Participation rate
1970	4,555,000	32.3%
1971	4,327,000	31.4%
1972	4,438,000	31.9%
1973	4,764,000	34.2%
1974	5,072,000	36.6%
1975	5,392,000	38.9%
1976	5,358,000	39.7%
1977	5,272,000	41.1%
1978	5,549,000	43.8%
1979	5,743,000	45.2%
1980	6,015,000	56.7%

Source: Adapted from United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Special Labor Force Reports*, Nos. 7, 13, 20, 26, 40, 50, 64, 80, 94, 120, 130, 144, 153, 164, 173, 183, 206, 216, 219, 237 (1960, 1961, 1962, 1963, 1964, 1965, 1966, 1967, 1968, 1970, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1974, 1975, 1977, 1978, 1979, 1980); and United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, News Release USDL 80-767, "Marital and Family Characteristics of Workers, March 1980" (Dec. 9, 1980).

items that served as major considerations when they were first establishing their child care initiatives. Sixty-two percent of the respondents selected items that dealt with meeting the needs of both parent-employees and those of the organization. In other words, designing a program to address both sets of needs was crucial.

Sixty-six percent of the respondents expressed concern with the quality of the child care program. These respondents reported that "implementing a child care initiative was not difficult, but implementing a *quality* (italics ours) program was most important."

Almost half (46 percent) of the survey respondents reporting child care centers as an initiative expressed concern about the child care center site. During telephone interviews, individuals

cited considerations involving safety, liability, visibility of children at the work site, and finding the best site, which was reported as "difficult." It appears that if an organization does not have space available within its physical facility that is suitable for a child care center, it is often difficult to find another site that meets its needs within the community.

Nineteen percent of the respondents expressed concern that they would be creating an inequity in benefits among employees within the organization. Additional data gathering in follow-up interviews indicated that once other important traditional employee benefits were met (that is, health plans, insurance plans, vacation benefits, pleasant working conditions), the child care needs of working parents must be addressed, even if this approach creates what some employees may consider an inequity in benefits. This is an important piece of information in that it deviates from the standard pattern of employers in implementing benefit plans at the workplace. The response suggests an increasing awareness of individual needs.

DID CHILD CARE INCENTIVES PAY OFF FOR THESE ORGANIZATIONS?

I asked our sponsoring organizations about their perceptions of whether the cost of their child care initiatives equaled or outweighed the benefits to the organization or vice versa. More than three fourths believe that the benefits of the child care initiative *outweighed* the cost. Employers cited the following reasons: less absenteeism by parent-employees, greater stability and loyalty, improved employee morale, enhancement of the organization's image to workers and the community, improved recruitment by attracting and maintaining quality personnel, employee appreciation of the child care service, less distraction and worry by employees about their children during the work day, return of valuable employees to work from maternity leaves sooner than in the past, and excellent public relations.

Table 10. Summary of perceived benefits of employer initiatives for child care for all sponsoring organizations and the weighted sum.

Response	Rank					W + Sum ¹
	1	2	3	4	5	
Recruitment advantage	51	34	13	7	4	448
Improved employee morale	33	16	16	25	18	345
Lower absentee rate	23	8	11	12	10	211
Less turnover	8	15	18	18	21	211
Attract persons on leave back to work	15	11	21	9	8	208
Attract available talented employees	11	19	21	3	5	205
Improve employee work satisfaction	8	20	9	5	13	170
Better public relations	7	12	8	16	15	154
Better community image	6	9	8	15	17	127
Less tardiness	2	6	8	14	2	88
Improve employee motivation	1	1	12	6	10	67
Improve production efficiency	0	5	4	6	4	48
Availability of temporary help	1	2	0	4	5	26
Provide equal opportunity employment	0	2	1	1	0	16
Tax advantage	1	1	1	1	0	14
Quality of product produced	0	0	2	2	1	11
Other	1	0	0	0	2	7

¹The formula for determining the weighted sum is as follows:

$$WS = Nr_1 (5) + Nr_2 (4) + Nr_3 (3) + Nr_4 (2) + Nr_5 (1)$$

Nr_1 = The number giving the item a rank of one

Nr_2 = The number giving the item a rank of two

Nr_3 = The number giving the item a rank of three

Nr_4 = The number giving the item a rank of four

Nr_5 = The number giving the item a rank of five

The weights 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 serve to invert the scale so that a large score is preferred.

Respondents ranked the *five* most significant effects of the child care initiatives they had implemented. They selected their responses from among the list in question C-4 of the questionnaire (see Appendix B). The questionnaire included a space for additional information. Table 10 reflects the ranked responses and the weighted sum for perceived effects of the child care initiatives.

All these factors have a synergistic effect in creating a more stable work force, which was the number one item selected by employers as their reason for creating child care initiatives. The programs achieved the effects for which they were designed. A significant point worth noting is that when both employee and employer needs are met, the successful merger of work and family may be possible.

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ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS

Despite the unfavorable economic conditions that existed at the time this study was conducted, a total of 67 percent of the survey respondents indicated that the prevailing economic constraints had not altered their present child care initiatives in any way. Another 25 percent reported that current economic prohibitions will make it difficult to increase the size and scope of their child care programs, but when the economy presents "a stronger image," these organizations plan to proceed with the expansion of the programs already in place.

A small group of employees, 7 percent, planned to augment their current child care programs. These organizations constitute health care employers, who for the most part sponsor on-site and off-site child care centers for working parents. These survey respondents reported expansion of their programs to include services for infants and toddlers in order to accommodate the population of parent-employees who are returning to work soon after the birth of a child. In addition, among the same group of respondents, some employers reported the extension of child care center operating hours in order to accommodate parents on all work shifts.

This response from employers once again indicates that many organizations feel an increasing responsibility for the needs of employees, and may also recognize that organizations are no longer only "economic units" but as Toffler (1981) reports, they are also responsible for

"complex, ecological, moral, political, racial, sexual, and social problems." Indeed, while economic conditions have received serious attention from U.S. organizations, they may not improve without a long-term view that embraces both employers and employees and their respective concerns.

TAX INCENTIVES

There have been numerous attempts by individuals, child advocacy groups, and local and state legislators to encourage the federal government to issue tax incentives to employers that would aid both the employer and employee with child care benefits. One of our important findings, however, is that employers, at this time, do not appear to be motivated by tax incentives. In addition, employers do not view tax advantages as a significant child care initiative. Items relating to tax incentives were among the lowest ranked items on the list of motivations of employers and achieved benefits. This finding may indicate that local and state governments should take a closer look at employers' needs before launching new legislation that could conceivably affect *all* organizations. Individual organizations may prefer to be guided primarily by their unique management agendas and parental needs within their organizations rather than by a nationwide agenda. Fashioning government policy that addresses individual organizational require-

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ments would be a vast undertaking, but one that would aid in enhancing work-family dynamics.

If Naisbitt's (1982) predictions regarding the future of political power of the United States are accurate, then the trend in implementation of new federal programs rests with local governments. Naisbitt indicates that "bottom up" participation in policy making has led to the restructuring of many political processes and will continue to do so in the future. This grass roots participation may come in part from employers for whom broader tax legislation that responds to the needs of an entire nation of people and organizations is not a motivation.

This study does not reflect the total effects of the Economic Tax Recovery Act of 1981, but it would be important to know if this new tax bill has had any major impact on organizational involvement in child care initiatives. Hewitt Associates, a major benefits consulting company, reports that as a result of ERTA, some employers are planning to add child care as an optional benefit to their flexible benefit programs.

START-UP COSTS

Total start-up costs were supplied by 50 percent of the respondents. The total range reported by all respondents was \$300 to \$999,999 (see Table 11). However, to better understand the start-up costs for the various child care options reported, it is necessary to consider each one separately. Note in the figures given that the low range for start-up costs is about the same for almost all child care initiatives, while the high range of this scale shows wide variations.

Employers interested in implementing child care initiatives should take into account the variables that influence start-up costs as reported by our sponsoring organizations. They are as follows: type of program, nature of sponsorship, geographic area of the organization, total number of employees who will make use of the program

(total number of children served), availability of a space within the physical plant, need or desire to build a facility, availability of outside funds for start-up costs (e.g., parent contributions, state/local funding, contributions from auxiliary groups, fund raising, and state and local regulations). Hewitt Associates (1982) estimates start-up costs for a child care center with 25 to 75 children at \$25,000 to \$150,000.

Information and referral programs may have a minimal start-up cost if the service is contracted through a local agency or a private organization. If a sponsoring organization agrees to bring in a paid consultant or to assign a portion of time for this job to an existing employee, then a percentage of salary would have to be figured into this function. In some cases employees are charged only a minimal cost like \$5 to \$10 for information. In other instances the service is free.

Costs for purchasing slots and vouchers depends primarily on how many employees use the service and the percentage of the employer contribution to it. Sometimes vouchers are issued on a sliding scale and therefore all employers do not receive the same amount of reimbursement. When employers purchase slots, some *contract* for child care slots and pay a flat fee to the contractor. The sum paid by the employer then helps to reduce child care costs to employees at the same center.

Alternative work patterns are directly tied to employee salaries, and for this reason most employees did not want to share the information or had not yet calculated the range of cost for implementing new work schedules. The greatest start-up cost factor for this initiative would be clerical, secretarial, and management time.

Working parent seminars represent either an ongoing educational program for different groups of employees or a one-time experience in the form of a series of workshops for a single group of employees. Start-up costs would vary according to which of these options is implemented.

Other child care initiatives, such as sick child care,

Table 11. Summary of the approximate range of start-up costs for child care initiatives reported.

<i>Initiative</i>	<i>Approximate range of start-up costs (Costs were rounded off to the nearest 100)</i>
<i>Center</i> (Includes work-site centers, participation in a consortium center)	\$300-\$999,000
<i>Information and referral</i> (Includes company sponsorship of services as well as participation in a community program)	\$350-\$500,000
<i>Purchase of slots or vouchers</i> (Includes contracts with family day care homes, licensed centers)	\$350-\$500,000
<i>Alternate work patterns</i>	No information was reported. This was part of the entire salary structure of the organizations.
<i>Working parent seminars</i> (Not including counseling services)	\$400-\$15,000
<i>Other</i> (Includes counseling services, in-kind services to local child care programs, clerical costs for salary deductions for child care, sick child care, before- and after-school programs)	\$2,500-\$12,500

counseling services, in-kind services, before- and after-school programs, and clerical costs for automatic deductions from paychecks all vary depending on the number of employees utilizing the service and the extent of employer participation.

FUNDING FOR START-UP COSTS

Forty-seven percent of the respondents reported that their organizations had assumed total responsibility for start-up costs. Further investigation revealed that the remaining organizations (those indicating partial payment) had drawn from a variety of sources: parent contributions, loans, fund raising events, union donations, and the like. Table 12 indicates the ways in which organizations funded their child care initiatives.

Sixty-eight percent of the survey respondents reported that they received no additional financial assistance for their child care initiative.

Another 32 percent of the respondents reported financial assistance from federal, state, or local funding. At the time of the survey, food programs, such as free lunches or reduced meal costs were available through the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act. Title XX of the Social Security Act allowed funds for child care to families who were considered to be at or near poverty level.

At present, with cutbacks in these programs by the federal government, many work-site child care centers are losing a source of financial aid that may affect their ongoing program operation. However, respondents indicated that economic conditions had not affected the status of their present programs.

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Table 12. Funding for start-up costs for child care initiatives.

<i>Type of funding</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
Total sum paid by organization	95	47
Partial sum paid by organization	52	25
Parent contributions	24	12
Loans	5	2
Federal/state/local contributions	9	4
Other: (Donations, fund raising, grants, in-kind services, union donations)	19	9
Total	204	99

AVERAGE ANNUAL OPERATING COST PER CHILD

Forty-two percent of the organizations surveyed (primarily those with child care centers) responded to this question. In follow-up telephone interviews with organizations that did not answer this question, respondents reported that information about average annual operating cost per child was not available or had not been calculated. Apparently, operating budgets were determined in a variety of ways, and it was difficult for respondents to answer this question. (Those respondents that were able to provide this figure reported a range of \$70 to \$4,000, with an overall average annual operating cost per child at \$2,400.)

Once again, respondents reported that costs depended on the type of initiative and the number of employees being served during a year. A report by Ogilvie (1972) indicates that the cost for child care centers is reduced as enrollment goes up.

TOTAL FOR OPERATING BUDGET

Fifty-two percent of the survey population responded to this question. The number reporting

indicated a broad range of total budget sums for the current year. The total operating budgets ranged from \$700 to \$445,000. Again, the total cost was dependent on the initiative to be offered and the outside services supplied to the organization. Variables such as parent contributions, financial assistance, in-kind services, scheduled opening date, geographic location, number of children, and options offered would influence the total budget figure considerably.

Respondents were less able to answer the questions relating to cost than any other questionnaire items. Most organizations that responded gave information relating to work-site child care centers. There was no correlation between an organization's size and whether it reported information relating to cost factors. Many finance organizations did feel that the information relating to budget was confidential. Other organizations reported that information on operating costs was under the jurisdiction of the account-

Table 13. Summary of strategies to assure program operation.

<i>Strategies</i>	<i>N¹</i>	<i>%</i>
Variable yearly donation to reduce costs	38	19.0
Lump-sum payment to cover operating costs	28	14.0
Benefit paid to each employee per week	14	0.7
Donation of facility	69	34.0
Donation of utilities	54	26.0
Donation of services	61	30.0
Donation of supplies	45	22.0
Other:		
Individual contributions		
Charitable trust contributions	26	13.0
Total	335	158.7

¹ Respondents checked more than one item. Therefore the number of people responding does not equal the total number of the survey sample (204).

ing department, and they were therefore unable to answer the questions.

Cost/benefit considerations are factors that influence many employers in their decision making on child care issues (Appalachian Regional Commission, 1982). Senn-Perry (1978), in her study, noted that cost was one of the main reasons for closing work-site child care centers. Obviously, more detailed and precise information is needed to aid employers in making assessments and decisions related to costs of child care initiatives.

ONGOING PROGRAM OPERATION

All survey respondents checked a variety of items that would best describe their organizations' involvement in the continued operation of the child care initiatives. Table 13 is a summary

of the strategies designed by respondents to assure ongoing operation of their programs.

It appears that employers currently involved in child care initiatives are eager to assure the operation of their programs. Many respondents checked the donation of in-kind services as an aid to program operations. These in-kind services can reduce total operating costs and perhaps reduce costs to both employers and employees.

The ongoing cost of child care initiatives, then, is variable, dependent upon the type of initiative, the geographic location of the sponsoring organization, the number of employees served, the program design, the availability of outside funding sources, and local and state regulations. The above factors affect not only start-up costs, but annual operating costs and consequently they can affect the continuing operation of the child care initiative.

APPENDIX A

SURVEY of EMPLOYER INITIATIVES for CHILD CARE: PERCEIVED BENEFITS to EMPLOYERS (Survey Questionnaire)

Name of Sponsoring Organization or Affiliate _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Phone _____

Name of Person Completing the Questionnaire _____

Position Title _____ Last Name, _____ First Name _____

.....

SECTION A—THE SPONSORING ORGANIZATION

1. Check the item that best describes the location of the sponsoring organization:
☐ City ☐ Rural
☐ Suburban ☐ Other (Please specify.) _____
2. Please indicate the approximate number of miles an average employee travels to the work site each day. _____ miles
3. Check the item that best describes the services or goods produced by your organization:

Nonmanufacturing

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ Communication | ☐ Labor Union |
| ☐ Computer Services | ☐ Legal Services |
| ☐ Construction | ☐ Retail/Wholesale Sales |
| ☐ Engineering | ☐ Research & Development |
| ☐ Finance | ☐ Transportation/Distribution |
| ☐ Government (Local, State, Federal) | ☐ Utilities |
| ☐ Medical/Health Care/Non-Profit | ☐ Other (Please specify.) _____ |
| ☐ Insurance | |

SURVEY OF EMPLOYER INITIATIVES FOR CHILD CARE: PERCEIVED BENEFITS TO EMPLOYERS

SECTION A (Continued)

Manufacturing

- ☐ Aerospace
- ☐ Apparel
- ☐ Chemicals
- ☐ Computers
- ☐ Defense
- ☐ Electronics
- ☐ Food

- ☐ Petroleum
- ☐ Plastics
- ☐ Printing
- ☐ Publishing
- ☐ Refining
- ☐ Other (Please specify.) _____

4. What is the total number of people employed at the sponsoring organization? _____
5. Of the total number in Item 4, how many are: males? _____
 how many are: females? _____
6. What is the total number of employees using the employer-sponsored child care program? _____
7. Of the total number in Item 6, how many are: males? _____
 how many are: females? _____
8. For those employees who participate in your child care program, please indicate how many are:
 Single: Male _____ Married: Male _____
 Female _____ Female _____
9. Please indicate the number of employees represented in each category listed below:

☐ Officials/Managers ☐ Professionals ☐ Technicians ☐ Sales Workers ☐ Office - Clerical	☐ Craft Workers (skilled) ☐ Operatives (semi-skilled) ☐ Laborers (unskilled) ☐ Service Workers ☐ Other (Please specify.) _____
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10. Please indicate the number of employees who use the child care program in each category listed below:

☐ Officials/Managers ☐ Professionals ☐ Technicians ☐ Sales Workers ☐ Office - Clerical	☐ Craft Workers (skilled) ☐ Operatives (semi-skilled) ☐ Laborers (unskilled) ☐ Service Workers ☐ Other (Please specify.) _____
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11. Please indicate the category that best describes your organizational structure:

☐ Publicly owned ☐ Family owned ☐ Partnership	☐ Not-For-Profit organization ☐ Other (Please specify.) _____
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12. Please indicate the date your program was established. _____
13. Please check all the items that best describe your organization's involvement in child care:
 - ☐ Child care center at work site
 - ☐ Child care center away from work site (_____ miles)
 - ☐ Participation in a child care consortium
 - ☐ In-house child care information and referral service
 - ☐ Contact with community information and referral service

CHILD CARE INITIATIVES FOR WORKING PARENTS

- ☐ Provide child care services in family day care homes
- ☐ Before/after programs for school age children
- ☐ Provisions for the care of sick children at home
- ☐ Purchase slots in community child care program
- ☐ Working parent seminars
- ☐ Voucher system
- ☐ Summer child care program for children of employees
- ☐ Flexible or cafeteria benefits program that includes a child care option
- ☐ In-kind services to outside child care organization (space, services, supplies)
- ☐ Alternative work schedules:
 - ☐ flexi-time
 - ☐ maternity leave
 - ☐ permanent part-time work with benefits
 - ☐ flexi-place
 - ☐ paternity leave
 - ☐ job sharing
- ☐ Counseling services to children and/or "parent-employees"
- ☐ Salary deductions for employees for payment of child care services
- ☐ Other (Please specify.) _____

SECTION B—MOTIVATION FOR IMPLEMENTING A CHILD CARE PROGRAM

1. Listed below are a number of reasons that might explain the motivation of your organization for implementing an employer-sponsored child care program. Please rank order the first five items with number 1 being the *most* important reason.
 - ☐ Social consciousness/awareness of management
 - ☐ Economic gains to the company
 - ☐ Better personnel relations
 - ☐ Union pressures or negotiations
 - ☐ Desire to create a more stable workforce
 - ☐ Federal/State/Local legislation
 - ☐ Encouragement from employees
 - ☐ Tax incentives
 - ☐ Equality of benefits
 - ☐ Recommendations or findings of employee task force
 - ☐ Improve position to attract employees
 - ☐ Pressure to follow examples set by other companies
 - ☐ Child advocacy
 - ☐ Other (Please specify.) _____
2. Please check the person(s) or department of the sponsoring organization that is responsible for the administration of the child care program:
 - ☐ A Board of Directors for the child care program selected by the sponsoring organization
 - ☐ Personnel Department
 - ☐ Child Care Service Department
 - ☐ Director of Community Affairs
 - ☐ Director of Nursing Services
 - ☐ Administrative office other than Personnel Office
 - ☐ Parent/Employee/Administration/Governing Board
 - ☐ Human Services Department
 - ☐ Other (Please specify.) _____

SURVEY OF EMPLOYER INITIATIVES FOR CHILD CARE: PERCEIVED BENEFITS TO EMPLOYERS

3. Have the current economic conditions altered your initiatives for child care in any way?

☐ No

☐ Yes (If yes, please indicate your future plans.)

4. Which of the following were major considerations when setting up your child care program:

☐ Liability concerns

☐ Transportation

☐ Inequity in benefits to employees

☐ Quality of program

☐ Visibility of children on site

☐ Site considerations

☐ Parent/Company needs

☐ Other (Please specify.)

5. Does your company have a policy regarding child care?

☐ No

☐ In preparation

☐ Yes (If yes, please summarize your policy or attach a copy.)

.....
SECTION C—PERCEIVED BENEFITS TO EMPLOYERS

1. In your perception, do the benefits of the child care program to your organization outweigh the costs?

☐ No (If no, please indicate why.)

☐ Yes (If yes, please indicate how the benefits outweigh the costs.)

2. In the course of operating your child care program, have any conflicts arisen between children involved in the program that have carried over to the employees at the work place?

☐ No

☐ Yes

3. If you answered "Yes" to Item 2, please explain if this has caused one or more of the following to take place:

☐ Reassignment of personnel

☐ Absenteeism

☐ Union involvement

☐ Other (Please specify.)

☐ Resignation of employees

☐ Reduction of number of children in the program

4. Which of the following items do you perceive as having been affected by the child care program? Please rank order the first five items, with number 1 being the item most significantly affected.

☐ Lower absentee rate

☐ Recruitment advantage

☐ Ability to attract available pool of talented employees

☐ Less tardiness

☐ Less turnover

☐ Ability to attract persons on leave back to workforce

☐ Availability of temporary help

☐ Improved production efficiency

☐ Quality of product produced

CHILD CARE INITIATIVES FOR WORKING PARENTS

- ☐ Improved employee morale
- ☐ Improved employee work satisfaction
- ☐ Improved employee motivation
- ☐ Ability to provide equal opportunity employment
- ☐ Better public relations
- ☐ Better community image
- ☐ Tax advantage
- ☐ Other (Please specify.) _____

SECTION D—THE COST OF THE CHILD CARE PROGRAM TO THE SPONSORING ORGANIZATION

1. What was the total start-up cost of the child care program? \$ _____
2. How were the start-up costs for the child care program funded? (Check all that apply.)
 - ☐ Total sum paid by organization
 - ☐ Partial sum paid by organization
 - ☐ Parent contributions
 - ☐ Loan
 - ☐ Federal/State/Local contribution
 - ☐ Other (Please specify.) _____
3. Did the sponsoring organization receive any financial assistance for start-up costs for the child care program?
 - ☐ No
 - ☐ Yes (If yes, please indicate the source(s) and the amount.)
Source(s) _____ Amount _____
4. What is the average annual operating cost per child for the child care program? \$ _____
5. What is the total operating budget for the child care program for the current year? \$ _____
6. Will the child care program receive any operating funds for the current year or next year from an outside source, other than parents or company support?
 - ☐ No
 - ☐ Yes (If yes, please indicate the source and the amount.)
Source _____ Amount _____
7. What contributions has the sponsoring organization made to assure the ongoing operation of the child care program? (Check all that apply.)
 - ☐ Variable yearly donation to reduce operating costs
 - ☐ Lump sum payment to cover operating cost regardless of amount
 - ☐ Employer benefit paid to each employee per week
 - ☐ Donation of facility
 - ☐ Donation of utilities
 - ☐ Donation of services
 - ☐ Donation of supplies
 - ☐ Other (Please specify.) _____

SECTION E—FEATURES OF THE CHILD CARE PROGRAM

1. Which of the following are features of your program? (Please check all that apply.)
 - ☐ Transportation
 - ☐ Meals (hot or cold) ☐ breakfast ☐ lunch ☐ snack ☐ dinner
 - ☐ Medical services (e.g., health screening, communication)
 - ☐ Dental services

SURVEY OF EMPLOYER INITIATIVES FOR CHILD CARE: PERCEIVED BENEFITS TO EMPLOYERS

- ☐ Professional counseling for parents relating to child care concerns (Do not include conferences, seminars, noon-time seminars, etc.)
- ☐ Professional counseling for children
- ☐ Parent resource center
- ☐ "Parent/Employee" discussion groups or seminars
- ☐ Library center for parents and children
- ☐ Baby room for nursing mothers
- ☐ Specialists as part of the program (e.g., physical education, music, art, etc.)
- ☐ Multi-generational program (e.g., foster grandparents, senior citizens as volunteers)
- ☐ Time set aside each day for parents to visit with their children
- ☐ Job sharing by child care program employees
- ☐ Flexi-time for child care program employees
- ☐ Bilingual staff
- ☐ Other (Please specify.) _____

.....
Please check if you are interested in receiving a copy of this research report:

- ☐ Interested
- ☐ Not interested

APPENDIX B

COVER LETTER I

You are among a select group of employers who have demonstrated resourcefulness, creativity, and initiative in attempting to meet the changing needs of individuals at the workplace, by implementing an employer-sponsored child care program for your employees.

I am conducting a national survey of all employer initiatives for child care. I am specifically interested in the question of the benefits of employer-sponsored child care programs as perceived by you, the employer. I need your input to assure the accuracy of this research and ask that you take a few minutes to complete the enclosed questionnaire. Of course, all your responses will be confidential and will be presented in aggregate form. Please feel free to add comments to any question you wish.

If you are interested in the findings of my research, so that you may compare your organization with the national aggregate data, kindly check the item at the conclusion of the questionnaire. If you have any questions or need clarification, please contact me at: (215) 572-2900.

I know you must be very busy, but I would appreciate it very much if you could take the time to complete the questionnaire and return it to us in the envelope provided by August 20, 1982.

Your cooperation in what we believe is a timely and important topic would be deeply appreciated.

Sincerely,

Renée Magid
Project Director

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